

Serial No: 09/659,653

Attorney Docket No.: 1999-0541

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge with thanks the consideration given to applicants' remarks in their "Response To Final Office Action" dated 03/08/2004, resulting in the withdrawal of the prior rejection under 35 USC 103(a).

The present paper is in response to the Office action dated 03/26/2004 in which each of the pending claims 1-9, 13 and 15-18 was rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Shiigi (US 6,304,898).

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

An important aspect of applicants' invention is the fact that applicants allow a user to transmit an handwritten message in the same message field as a typewritten message that was previously received. A typical use of the invention is in conjunction with the well known email "reply" function. This is depicted in FIG. 8. The user has already received a typewritten message from "Lillian Linnel" about a meeting with Mike Armstrong. The user has input a handwritten reply, saying "OK—tell him to come to FP this time." Importantly, both the original typewritten message and the handwritten reply appear in the same message field—namely (in this example) the main body of the message.

Shiigi discloses a system that, like applicants' method and apparatus, enables an email user to transmit email that contains a handwritten message. Applicants find nothing in Shiigi that explicitly mentions sending typewritten text and handwriting in the same message. Applicants will assume for purposes of argument, however, that in at least some of Shiigi's embodiments, it is indeed possible for typewritten material and handwritten material to be sent together in a given email transaction. Applicants note, for example, embodiments in Shiigi in which the handwritten material is sent as an *attachment* to an email message. See, for example, column 6, lines 53-55 of Shiigi.

Applicants will assume for purposes of argument that a person skilled in the art reading Shiigi would understand that this mode of operation in Shiigi could encompass a scenario in which the user who had created the handwritten attachment had attached it to a copy of the original typewritten email that had been composed by a second user.

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However, applicants' claims distinguish the invention from Shiigi by virtue of claim language that limits the invention to a method and apparatus in which the typewritten message and the handwritten message image are transmitted together in the same message field—which, as noted above, is illustratively the body of the message. See independent claim 1, line 9 and independent claim 15, line 8.

Applicants' specification makes clear that an attachment to an email message, such as envisioned by Shiigi, is not "in the same message field" as the body of that email message. The specification describes two alternatives for how typewritten and handwritten messages could be sent together. One of these is the above-described same-message-field embodiment that the claims actually encompass. The other is an attachment-based embodiment that the claims do not encompass. See, for example, p. 14, lines 10-12 of the specification indicating that "[t]he actual handwritten image message may be integral to the message field or an attachment to the email." This teaching in the specification makes clear that when a handwritten message in the form of an attachment, it is not in the same message field as the typewritten message. This, in turn, means that applicants' claim limitation "in the same message field" cannot be said to be met by Shiigi.

Applicants do recognize that the examiner must give the words of a claim their broadest reasonable meaning. However, the term "message field" as applied to emails is sufficiently well-defined in the art as to preclude reading of the claimed term "same message field" as encompassing an email attachment.

The examiner's attention is respectfully directed in this regard to the attached "Microsoft Knowledge Base Article 172755" that was accessed by the undersigned attorney on 05/25/04 and printed from the website <http://support.microsoft.com>. This article makes clear that the main portion or "body" of an email message is a field that does not encompass attachments. See, in particular, the following statement appearing under the heading "Working with the Message or Notes Field."

The Message field is most commonly associated with a Mail Message form and is the main portion or "body" of the message.

Applicants do not know when this particular article was first available to the public. Applicants are thus not able to represent that this article appeared on the Web

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prior to applicants' filing date. However, since this article describes Microsoft Outlook 97, it is believed that this article, or the previous version thereof mentioned in the article, was available no later than 1997, which is well prior to applicants' filing date.

In at least one other embodiment disclosed by Shiigi, the handwritten message is in the form of pixel data. See, for example, col. 2, lines 45-51 and col. 8, lines 55-58. It does not appear that email attachments are involved in such embodiments. However, contrary to the requirements of applicants' claims, applicants find nothing in the disclosure of such embodiments in Shiigi that incorporates sending of such pixel data "in the same message field" as a typewritten message that was composed by a second user.

The Office action points specifically to col. 2, lines 18-45 of Shiigi. Those portions of Shiigi certainly describe the transmission of handwritten messages using email servers and email clients. However, applicants finding nothing within Shiigi generally, nor at col. 2, lines 18-45 specifically, that contradicts any of the foregoing discussion of what Shiigi does and does not appear to teach. Specifically, col. 2, lines 42-45 of Shiigi is pointed to in the Office action as anticipating the limitation "in the same message field." Applicants do not find anything at that point in Shiigi—or anywhere else in the reference—that does, in fact, anticipate that limitation, as discussed above.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that applicants' independent claims 1 and 15—and thus each of applicants' dependent claims as well—distinguish the invention from Shiigi. Reconsideration is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Microsoft Knowledge Base Article - 172755

OL97: Working with the Message or Body of an Outlook Item

View products that this article applies to.

This article was previously published under Q172755

SUMMARY

This article describes how Microsoft Outlook 97 implements the Message or Notes field and answers some common questions regarding its use when customizing Outlook forms.

MORE INFORMATION

NOTE: This article discusses using fields and controls with Outlook forms and it is important to understand the difference between the two.

For more information on the differences between fields and controls, please see the following article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

168975 How to Use Fields and Controls with VBScript

Working with the Message or Notes Field

The Message field is most commonly associated with a Mail Message form and is the main portion or "body" of the message. This is a unique field because it supports Rich Text Formatting (RTF), meaning that you can change various attributes of the text, such as the font size and formatting. You can also embed objects, such as shortcuts or files into the message field.

This field also exists on other Outlook forms. On a Post form, it is called the Message field, but on all other forms, it is referred to as the Notes field. When accessing this field through the Outlook object model, use the Body property of the appropriate item (ContactItem, PostItem, and so on).

The following table summarizes the naming conventions:

Item Type	Field Name	Property Name
-----	-----	-----
Mail	Message	Body
Post	Message	Body
Contact	Notes	Body
Appointment	Notes	Body
Meeting Request	Notes	Body
Task	Notes	Body
Task Request	Notes	Body
Journal	Notes	Body
Note*	N/A	Body

* You cannot customize "Note" items.

NOTE: The remainder of this article will use the term "Message field", but unless otherwise noted, information will apply to the Notes field as well.

Each Outlook item contains one Message field to store RTF information; it is not possible to add an additional field of the same type as the Message field.

Working with the Message or Notes Control

When designing an Outlook form, you can use the Message control more than once on a form. However, when you insert a second Message control on a form, Outlook displays the following warning:

This form has more than one Message or Notes control. If more than one control is visible at run time, only one control works.

This warning may also appear when you use the form, (at "run time") such as when you switch to a form page that contains a second Message control.

Outlook controls are typically bound to MAPI fields to store the actual data and each Outlook form (or item) has only one field that supports RTF. Therefore, when you drag the Message field from the Field Chooser onto the form, it is automatically bound to the appropriate Outlook field. You cannot change this behavior. If there is more than one Message field on a form, they all display the same data since there is only one field of this type permitted for each Outlook form. However, if you change data in one of the Message fields, it does not automatically replicate to the other Message field unless you refresh the field by saving and reopening the form or setting the Body property via code. This is the main reason for the warning message mentioned above.

The control used to display the Message field is built into the Outlook program and is not designed for use on non-Outlook forms. However, you can add the control to the Control Toolbox since it is a registered control on the system. Use your right mouse button to click on a blank area of the Control Toolbox and from the context-sensitive menu, click Custom Controls. "Outlook DocSite OLE Control." should appear in the list of available controls. This is the control used to display the Message field.

NOTE: The other Outlook-specific control is the "Outlook Recipient Collection Edit OLE Control," which is used for the To and From fields on a Mail Message. It is specifically designed to resolve e-mail addresses and provide other functionality specific to fields containing e-mail addresses, such as handling copy and paste between fields of this type.

Working with the Body Property

Although you can use Rich Text Formatting through the user interface, when you use the Body property from Microsoft Visual Basic Script (VBScript) or Microsoft Visual Basic for Applications automation code, all of the text formatting is lost. This is because the data type of the Body field is text, so it behaves no differently than other types

of controls, such as a label or textbox.

You can write VBScript code that will retrieve the Body of the message and add text to the beginning of it; however, you cannot preserve the text formatting. Use the Body property to retrieve the text that is in the body. Programmatically add extra text to the beginning of the body (Item.Body = "Added text" & Item.Body). When VBScript replaces the text in the field, the text is unformatted and any previous formatting is lost. There is no workaround to this limitation.

For more information on manipulating text within a form's Message field, please see the following article in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[162995](#) VBScript Cannot Access Characters in the Body Property

REFERENCES

For more information about creating solutions with Microsoft Outlook 97, please see the following articles in the Microsoft Knowledge Base:

[166368](#) How to Get Help Programming with Outlook

[170783](#) Q&A: Questions about Customizing or Programming Outlook

The information in this article applies to:

- Microsoft Outlook 97

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